

HB 4141 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Human Services and Housing

Action Date: 02/05/20

Action: Do pass and be referred to Ways and Means by prior reference

Vote: 9-0-0-0

Yeas: 9 - Helt, Keny-Guyer, Meek, Mitchell, Noble, Sanchez, Schouten, Williams, Zika

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Amie FenderSosa, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 2/3, 2/5

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Appropriates \$2,616,255 from the General Fund to the Department of Administrative Services for the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Fund established in ORS 184.498. The moneys may be used to hire staff and increase the number and diversity of CASA Volunteer Programs. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Leveraging state moneys; state funding represents about 19 percent of program revenue
- Children who are in foster care and have a CASA spend an average of five months less time in foster care
- There are 22 local CASA programs in Oregon
- In 2018, 234,000 volunteer hours were donated
- There are over 11,500 children in foster care
- Approximately 4,500 children currently have a CASA
- Bill would provide a CASA for approximately 1,000 additional children
- Program consistency and quality assurance
- Recruitment and training of CASA volunteers

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) are volunteers appointed by courts to advocate on behalf of abused and neglected children. They investigate, examine, and recommend the best options to a court, for a child to be safe, have a permanent home, and to thrive. CASAs spend the majority of their time interviewing people involved in the child's life and the case, including teachers, foster parents, attorneys, caseworkers, counselors, parents, medical professionals, and family members to determine the facts and circumstances of the child's situation.

CASAs receive approximately 40 hours of in-depth training through their local CASA Volunteer Program. Upon completion, all volunteers are sworn in by a local judge and may be assigned to cases. CASA supervisors provide guidance and support to volunteers for the duration of each case.

House Bill 4141 appropriates \$2,616,255 from the General Fund to the Department of Administrative Services for the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Fund.